

RICE UNIVERSITY

**Folk and Western Influences in
Pancho Vladigerov's *Rhapsody Vardar***

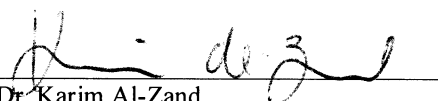
by

Cameron M. Smith

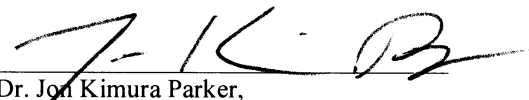
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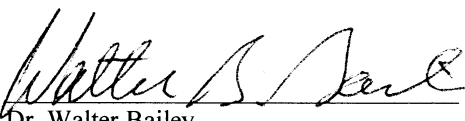
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ABSTRACT

Folk and Western Influences in Pancho Vladigerov's *Rhapsody Vardar*

by

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This thesis presents an in-depth discussion and analysis of the stylistic influences of Bulgarian composer Pancho Vladigerov (1899-1978), and their presentation in his *Rhapsody Vardar*, Opus 16. Vladigerov's background includes studies in both his native Bulgarian folk music, as well as formal western training at two different music academies in Berlin. The first chapter provides relevant biographical information, and explores aspects of Vladigerov's compositions which derive from Western European traditions, including a discussion of the composers and styles that influenced his writing. This is done through discussion and analysis of his *Three Pieces for Piano*, Opus 15, a work written in the same year as his *Rhapsody Vardar*. Chapter two provides a general overview of Bulgarian folk music, especially during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chapter three brings together these observations in an analysis of Vladigerov's landmark piano work, *Vardar Rhapsody*.

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CHAPTER 1

Pancho Vladigerov is without question the most renowned composer of Bulgarian art music. After 500 years of oppression and occupation by the Ottoman empire, the development of Bulgarian art music had a comparatively late start at the end of the nineteenth century, coinciding with their freedom from the Turks. Vladigerov, through his western formal training and nationalistic folk influences, contributed a wealth of inspiring and colorful music to a country only just beginning to find its place in the art-music world. The diverse spectrum of his compositions has been a source of great pride to the people of Bulgaria to this day. As a result, the most prestigious conservatory in the country has been named after him, called the “Pancho Vladigerov National Music Academy.” In addition, a major piano competition has been named after him. The “Pancho Vladigerov International Piano Competition” was held for the first time in 1986.

Vladigerov came from an educated family. His father, Haralan, came from Shumen, a city in the northeastern part of Bulgaria, where he was born and raised. Although Haralan studied abroad, he returned to settle in Shumen with a doctoral degree in law. Vladigerov’s mother, Eliza, came from the Black Sea city of Odessa, Ukraine. She studied medicine in Paris, and decided, on the recommendation of a close friend, to settle in Bulgaria.¹ She was appointed a doctor in Shumen where she met Haralan, and shortly thereafter the two were married.

A year after the marriage, on March 12th, 1899, Eliza gave birth to twin boys, Luben and Pancho. The Vladigerovs were very affluent, with the father a lawyer and the mother a doctor, and were a part of the upper-class society in Bulgaria. Eliza herself

¹ Evgeny Pavlov, *Pancho Vladigerov* (Sofia: Musika, 2000), 12. Translated for the author by Vessela Gintcheva.

played the piano competently, and from a very early age the two boys grew up with music in the house. When the children were young, the parents decided that Luben should study the violin and Pancho should study the piano. Vladigerov received his first piano lessons from his mother, but soon after began studying with a local piano teacher who had recently returned from her studies at the Vienna Conservatory.

From the beginning, Vladigerov showed great promise. He had perfect pitch, could reproduce many familiar melodies on the piano, and learned material very quickly. Vladigerov would also show his creative abilities by improvising at the piano for long periods of time, and he soon began composing. According to Vladigerov's biographer, Evgeny Pavlov, who personally interviewed Vladigerov several times, when the young composer went to his piano lesson he would often tell his teacher, "First let me play for you what I composed."² Luben and Pancho would perform at home in front of family guests, and the praises made their parents very happy. Their first official performance was in 1906 in the library in Shumen, where the two boys performed together, and were enthusiastically received by the audience. Vladigerov later remarked that, "the years went by quickly and I went to study abroad and perform concerts on big European stages, but the memory of the stage of our little library never left me, and it will never leave me."³

Haralan died of a heart attack in 1908, when Pancho and Luben were nine years old, and his early death had a profound impact on the family. Eliza did not want to remarry, and left alone with her children, she decided to dedicate herself entirely to encouraging their musical gifts.

² Ibid., 17.

³ Ibid., 18.

Vladigerov's formal training saw him through a variety of teachers with a variety of backgrounds, contributing to his diverse style. The family left Shumen in 1910 so Vladigerov could study composition in Sofia with the most famous Bulgarian composer and theorist of the time, Dobri Hristov. When he first listened to Vladigerov in an audition, he was extremely impressed by the young composer's abilities, and in particular, his skill at improvising.⁴ In addition to composition lessons, Vladigerov studied piano with Heinrich Vizner, a pianist, pedagogue, and conductor who taught at the private music school in Sofia.⁵

For two years, the boys studied in Sofia. At about the same time, Vladigerov began writing down his compositions down for the first time. His early works include elements from both folk and western influences. Most were piano pieces, including a Bulgarian rhapsody, and a piece called, *Potpourri*, both of which have elements of Bulgarian folk music. *Potpourri* is based on folk songs, and includes sections in irregular meters such as 5/8. But Vladigerov also wrote pieces in more traditional genres, such as a piano sonata in four movements, in addition to several other pieces, all by the age of twelve.

Hristov, seeing Vladigerov's great potential, encouraged the young composer's mother to take her sons abroad to study, since there were no great conservatories in Bulgaria at the time. Eliza followed his advice and took them to Vienna, Kiev, and Paris, auditioning for teachers in each city. Although the young musicians were both very well received at all of the auditions, ultimately the family moved to Berlin in June of 1912, where Pancho and Luben studied with excellent teachers from the *Staatliche*

⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁵ Ivan Hlebarov: 'Vladigerov, Pancho' *Grove Music Online* ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 12 August 2007).

Akademische Hochschule für Musik, a conservatory in Berlin for high school-age students. Since the twins were only thirteen years old at the time, they had to wait two years before they were able to formally enroll in the school. In the interim, their teachers, Paul Juon (who taught Pancho composition and theory), Heinrich Barth (who taught Pancho piano, and was head of the keyboard department at the school), and Henri Marteau (who taught Luben violin) gave lessons to the brothers privately until they officially entered the school in 1914.

The move to Berlin began many serious years of hard work for the young composer. Heinrich Barth, his piano teacher, greatly favored the classical composers, and studying their music with Barth over the course of five years helped Vladigerov develop a strong pianistic foundation. Vladigerov was equally dedicated to his theory and composition studies with Paul Juon. He spent most of his time studying from a book on harmony written by his own teacher, and excelled at the subject.⁶ During these years, Vladigerov wrote many works, but considered his first official Opus to be his Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Major.⁷ He and his brother performed it at Marteau's home to great acclaim from several critics and musicians who attended. Among the guests was the composer, Ernst von Dohnanyi.⁸

Vladigerov's studies continued in 1915 at the prestigious *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin, where he was accepted early, without having graduated from his previous school. There he studied in the composition masterclass of Friederich Gernsheim, who was a German composer, and vice president of the academy. Gernsheim also had a concert

⁶ Pavlov, 34.

⁷ He considered this his first opus even though he had already written a violin sonata in F major the year prior, 1913.

⁸ Pavlov, 36.

career, both as a pianist and conductor, and continued concertizing during this time.⁹

Under Gernsheim's tutelage, Vladigerov continued his study of music theory, especially focusing on counterpoint, and wrote several fugues, chorales, and other contrapuntal works.¹⁰ He also wrote *Variations for Piano*, Opus 3, on a Bulgarian folk theme. It is a lengthy work written in a virtuoso style similar to that of Franz Liszt. Vladigerov performed it at the Academy demonstrating that, in addition to his composition skills, he had become a great pianist with a formidable technique.¹¹

In 1916, Gernsheim died, and Vladigerov continued his composition studies with composer and conductor, Georg Schumann, who later in 1918 filled Gernsheim's post as vice president of the academy. During this time (when Vladigerov was seventeen - eighteen years old), he was greatly influenced by many composers, such as Liszt, Wagner, Debussy, and Richard Strauss, and he most admired the music of the Russian masters such as Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and especially, Rachmaninoff. Throughout his musical output, one can hear the influences of many of these composers blended into his own writing style. At this time, Vladigerov also worked hard to learn more about orchestration. He studied Rimsky-Korsakov's "Principles of Orchestration" as well as orchestral scores on his own, and this period marked the beginning of a long endeavor in which he wrote many large orchestral works, including two symphonies, five piano concertos, two violin concertos, and numerous smaller works for orchestra.¹²

⁹ Gaynor G. Jones: 'Gernsheim, Friederich' *Grove Music Online* ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 12 August 2007).

¹⁰ Pavlov, 38.

¹¹ Ibid., 39.

¹² At this time, Sofia had a radio orchestra which searched for Bulgarian works to perform live on the radio. By transcribing his works for orchestra, Vladigerov was given more opportunities for his music to be publicized and performed on the radio. Throughout his lifetime, he transcribed dozens of his pieces for full or chamber orchestra.

After Heinrich Barth's retirement in 1917, Vladigerov became a private student of the famous Russian pianist and conductor, Leonid Kreutzer, who was living in Berlin at the time. Over the years, Vladigerov would become very close with Kreutzer, and was very much influenced by him. He was a young Russian who had studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and someone Vladigerov looked up to. Also, Kreutzer had been a student of Glazunov, so Vladigerov believed that he would have more of an appreciation for his compositions.¹³

Vladigerov continued his composition studies with Schumann at the *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin until he graduated in 1921. By this time, he had already become famous in Bulgaria, having concertized extensively throughout his native country, as well as in Berlin. In the same year, Vladigerov had several other notable successes outside of his school. On March 5th, 1921, his *Violin Concerto No. 1* was premiered by violinist Gustav Havemann with the Berlin Philharmonic and Fritz Reiner conducting. Just twelve days after the premier of the violin concerto, Vladigerov performed his *Piano Concerto No. 1* with the Berlin Philharmonic. This was an important premier for Vladigerov because it was the first time his piano concerto was performed outside of Bulgaria. Critics gave him good reviews. One example from *Die Berliner Zeitung* states,

His piano concerto, Opus 6, which he performed himself is without a doubt an accomplished work. Vladigerov is a Bulgarian, and as such, he has not only the language in common with the Russians, but also their musical sensitivity. He is an immediate recipient of the traditions of Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky. From them, he has taken a bright compositional technique, and their treatment of orchestration.¹⁴

¹³ Pavlov, 41.

¹⁴ Erich Urban, *Die Berliner Zeitung*, 24 March 1921.

Off the concert stage, his success at the academy was also recognized. During his study there, he was honored with the Mendelssohn Award¹⁵ in 1918 for his *Piano Concerto No. 1*, Opus 6, and his *Six Lyrical Songs*, Opus 5. He won this award a second time in 1920 for his *Three Impressions for Orchestra*, Opus 9.

Vladigerov continued to concertize and compose throughout a lengthy and successful career, but the early years growing up in Bulgaria, studying in Sofia, and his years at the academy shaped his compositional language. His education is an amalgamation of numerous influences and backgrounds, and his music reflects these diversities.

Vladigerov wrote several of his more well-known works in the year 1922. In addition to his *Burlesque for Violin and Orchestra*, Op. 14, Vladigerov also composed *Three Pieces for Piano*, Opus 15, consisting of the character pieces, “Prelude,” “Autumn Elegy,” and “Humoresque.” This set of piano pieces would become one of his most popular works for the instrument. In December of the same year, Vladigerov completed his most famous work, *Rhapsody Vardar*. While the entire diversity of Vladigerov’s works cannot be summed up in these two alone, they do reflect the wide range of his influences up to this point, and are some of his most well-known and beloved compositions. In its style, *Three Pieces for Piano* tends to reflect the western tradition of piano music with which Vladigerov was familiar, while the *Rhapsody Vardar* incorporates aspects of folk music, as we shall see.

¹⁵ This award was given annually from the *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin to the best composition by a student composer.

Vladigerov's *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, can best be described as character pieces. Character pieces are typically solo piano works that are relatively short in length, and express a character, or mood. Vladigerov had numerous examples to draw from. Character pieces, as well as other smaller genres of the piano were abundant, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the works of composers such as Franz Liszt, Frederick Chopin, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Isaac Albeniz, Maurice Ravel, and Claude Debussy, among many others. There is no question that Vladigerov's *Three Pieces for Piano* is influenced by not only nineteenth-century romantic music, but also by elements of impressionism, such as whole tone harmony and harmonic planing (parallel movement of chords found in some of Debussy's compositions). Though these pieces are not programmatic, they do depict three contrasting characters. The first, "Prelude," has sweeping, long melody-lines primarily within right-hand chords, while the left hand has arpeggio figures as an accompaniment. This piece features a variety of moods through rich harmonies filled with chromaticism. In "Autumn Elegy," the composer captures a more thoughtful, introverted mood with a slow, pulsing pedal point throughout the piece. The final piece, "Humoresque," is sparkling, playful, and full of humor and wit.

"Prelude" opens with a five-measure introduction that is primarily coloristic in effect. Difficult, arpeggiated passages weave up and down over a pedal-point on F. These passages are built on traditional chords: tonic, Neapolitan 6th, and diminished 7th over the tonic pedal. In the second half of each of the first two measures, however, Vladigerov writes an interesting effect of parallel seventh chords (of differing qualities), that descend chromatically (see Example 1.1). These chords introduce a whole-tone sonority (e.g., D \flat , F, G, B on beat three of m. 1) which will be used in numerous places

later in the piece. The effect of chromatically descending chords is also used later in the piece in mm. 21-22, 42, 44, and 70-73.¹⁶



Example 1.1 Vladigerov: "Prelude" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm. 1-2.

The effects of these writing techniques evoke a brooding, restless quality through the thick harmonies and textures.

Upon hearing the main theme of Vladigerov's "Prelude," there is no question that Rachmaninoff was an inspiration for this piece. Vladigerov had such an admiration for Rachmaninoff that when he was eighteen, he dreamed of meeting him in St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, he did not manage to accomplish this at the time because of the Russian October Revolution of 1917.^{17, 18} The similarities to the Rachmaninoff preludes, Op. 23, No. 5, and Op. 23, No. 6 are evident (see Examples 1.2a, 1.2b, and 1.2c). Not only is the texture very similar, but the use of pedal point is also prevalent in Rachmaninoff. Examples of pedal point in Rachmaninoff include his *Prelude in G Minor*, shown in Example 1.2b, his *Moment-Musical No. 4 in E minor* in mm. 15-22, and in the famous opening of his Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor.

¹⁶ In measures 70-73, the technique is similar, but the texture is more thin, with measure 72 noted as an exception. Here, not only is the texture full, and more chordal than in the opening of the piece, but the direction ascends chromatically, rather than descends.

¹⁷ Pavlov, 41.

¹⁸ Vladigerov did finally meet Rachmaninoff many years later in December of 1929 at a concert given by the older Russian composer in Berlin.

cantando e molto appassionato

p *f* *p*

8

f

Example 1.2a Vladigerov: "Prelude" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 6-10.

Un poco meno mosso

pp

Example 1.2b Rachmaninoff: *Prelude in G minor*, Op. 23, No. 5, mm 35-37.



Example 1.2c Rachmaninoff: *Prelude in E-flat Major*, Op. 23, No. 6, mm 1-4.

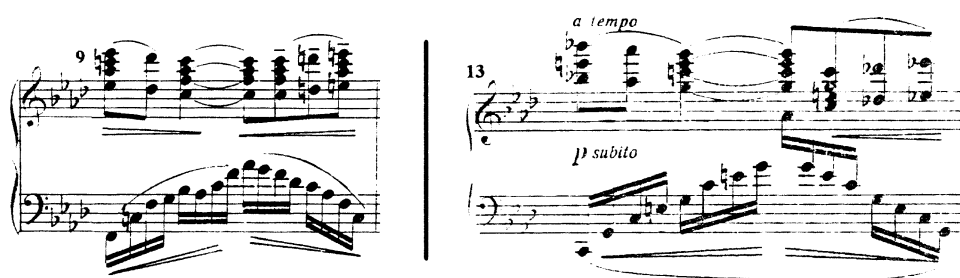
Vladigerov uses several different types of scales in this piece, but favors the melodic scales, both major and minor. Melodic minor is clearly found in the very opening of the main theme (see Example 1.2a, mm 6-7), and throughout much of the piece. Melodic major (major scale with flatted sixth and seventh scale degrees) is used more sparingly, but can be found in many places as the melody line weaves over the changing harmonies in the left hand. Examples of melodic major as shown in Example 1.3 can be found in m. 13 (C melodic major for the first half of the measure), and 17 (F melodic major).



Example 1.3 Vladigerov: "Prelude" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 13, 17.

By using melodic minor and major scales, one has access to not one, but two dominant seventh chords. Specifically, in melodic minor, there is a possibility of dominant harmony on $\hat{5}$ (presuming the seventh is raised) or $\hat{7}$. In melodic major, there is the possibility on $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{7}$. And while IV and V chords can be either major or minor in the

melodic minor scale, both of these chords are minor in the melodic major scale. While this may not conform to typical western practice in terms of having a dominant chord that is major, or a raised seventh scale degree that acts as a leading tone to the tonic, this can still work effectively in a tonal setting. The flatted sixth scale degree pulls very strongly to the fifth scale degree over tonic harmony. Vladigerov uses this technique of ending phrases melodically with lowered $\hat{7}$, $\hat{6}$, $\hat{5}$ numerous times throughout the piece. Examples can be seen at the beginning of each of the following measures (see Example 1.4).



Example 1.4 Vladigerov: "Prelude" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 9, 13.

Using the above technique, Vladigerov also moves toward $\hat{1}$ in the same fashion ($\hat{3}$, $\hat{2}$, $\hat{1}$), using $\flat\hat{2}$ to make it work. These instances he uses more sparingly, saving them for more significant moments, such as cadences at the end of long melodic lines (see Example 1.5).



Example 1.5 Vladigerov: "Prelude" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, m 21.

While a leading tone is normally thought of as $\hat{7}$, a note whose function in a diatonic scale is to lead upward towards the tonic, in the above examples, which use the melodic major scale, one can consider either $\hat{6}$, or $\hat{2}$ (if flatted) as "upper leading tones" which

pull downwards toward $\hat{5}$ or $\hat{1}$ (tonic harmony). Especially in the case of a flatted $\hat{2}$, the use of the Neapolitan 6th chord becomes facilitated, expanding harmonic possibilities (e.g., m. 3, from the introduction).

In addition to these melodic scales, Vladigerov, who was undeniably influenced by impressionistic composers, makes use of the whole tone scale. Much like with the melodic major scale, it is used sporadically throughout the piece, and can be found in mm. 8, 11-12, 20, and 47-48 (see Example 1.6).



Example 1.6 Vladigerov: "Prelude" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 47-48.

Following the opening statement of the theme, the role of the hands switch temporarily with the melody in the left, and the arpeggio figures in the right, before returning to their original roles in a return to opening material. Measure 70, where Vladigerov writes *Un poco più mosso*, marks the beginning of a lengthy, and dramatic buildup. Along the way, the technical demands on the pianist become greater, with fast chords in both hands, huge leaps, and very rapid arpeggios, scales, and chromatic octaves. Numerous composers at this time employed these virtuoso techniques in their compositions, but this passage has the particular look of Franz Liszt (see Example 1.7).

83 *p* *sub. o* *cresc. molto* *Lyrical Cadenza* *allegro*

84 *Furioso (Brillante)* *ff*

85 *ff*

86 *(martellato)* *(con gran bravura)* *f* *cresc.* *cresc. molto*

88 *Grandioso* *ff*

Example 1.7 Vladigerov: "Prelude" from Three Pieces for Piano, Op. 15, mm 83-89.

In this buildup, Vladigerov uses several effects, including bichordal harmonies in mm. 83 and 84 (this combination of different chords is over a dominant pedal in m. 83). Liszt also used bichordal, and polytonal techniques in some of his works, such as his *Transcendental Etude No. 11 in D-flat, "Harmonies du Soir."* Vladigerov combines clashing seventh chords in m. 84, as well as whole tone sonorities in mm. 85 and 86 (see

Example 1.7). Alternating chromatic octaves such as the ones found in mm. 87 and 88 were not uncommon in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art music. A few notable examples are at the end of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* (mm 893-904), and at the end of the last movement of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, (mm 297-300).

Immediately following this buildup, the original melody returns in m. 89, and is initially presented chordally, with a *quadruple-forte* marking. After that, the opening texture is regained, with some variation later as it progresses. In m. 110, the melody and accompaniment again switch hands, though now the music functions as closing material, with the harmony maintaining a tonic pedal point until the end of the piece.

The second piece, "Autumn Elegy," was actually composed first, and dedicated to Vladigerov's close friend, pianist Dimitar Shishmanov. After composing all three, Vladigerov decided to rearrange the set because he felt it was more logical and interesting when performed in this order.¹⁹ "Autumn Elegy" greatly contrasts "Prelude," and bears striking similarities to Ravel's "Le Gibet" from *Gaspard de la Nuit*, written fourteen years earlier. Although it is not quite as bleak as "Le Gibet," Vladigerov makes the following marking at the beginning of the score: *languido, doloroso con rassegnazione* (languid, dolorous with resignation). The tempo is slow and measured, and Vladigerov begins with a simple motive of only three notes: G A \flat G, upon which he expands (see Example 1.8).

¹⁹ Pavlov, 65.

Op. 15 No 2

1 **Lento assai** (♩ = 63)

(languido, doloroso con rassegnazione)

(molto tenero) **pp**

ppp *m. g.* **pp** *m. d.*

Example 1.8 Vladigerov: “Autumn Elegy” from Three Pieces for Piano, Op. 15, mm 1-2.

The note G becomes an alternating pedal point through the great majority of the piece, in a similar fashion to the tolling B \flat in “Le Gibet,” and the successions of chords in “Autumn Elegy” creates a similar texture for much of the piece to that of “Le Gibet.”

Harmonically, the key signature has three flats, suggesting C minor (since C is a central key throughout the piece as we will see), but in fact, C minor is only established for one measure in the entire piece (m. 31). Rather, Vladigerov invokes G phrygian, one of the most extensively used modes in Bulgarian folk music. The key of C major plays an important role harmonically in this piece, and the repeated G is tied to it, serving as its lengthy dominant. The arrival of C is hinted at in m. 9, and later established in m. 15 as an important harmonic goal thus far in the piece. As in his “Prelude,” Vladigerov uses melodic major, maintaining the G, A \flat , G motive within a C major context. At this point in the piece, the main theme emerges in long chords (see Example 1.9).

14 *molto ritard* *Lento* (♩ = 72) *(un poco più sciolto del tempo primo)*
(lasciar spiccare l'alta vo.)
pp *f* *lunga* *p* *pp* *(molto tenero)*
ppp *una corda*

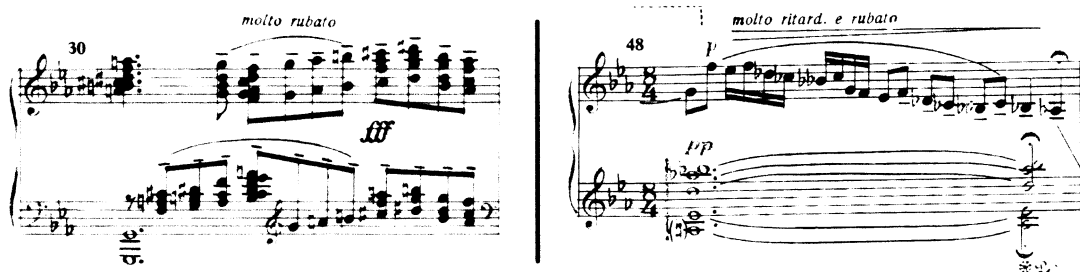
17 *pp* *f*

19 *pp*

Example 1.9 Vladigerov: "Autumn Elegy" from Three Pieces for Piano, Op. 15, mm 15-19.

This theme follows a similar modal pattern that was discussed earlier in the "Prelude." Starting in m. 16, the melody notes are $\flat\hat{7}$, $\flat\hat{6}$ (enharmonically respelled), $\hat{5}$, arriving at a cadence in the key of C. He follows this in beat three of m. 17 with $\flat\hat{3}$, $\flat\hat{2}$, $\hat{1}$, lowering the second scale degree in the same manner as in the "Prelude" in m. 21.

Vladigerov also includes whole tone harmony here, although its use is fairly limited in this piece because of the nearly constant $G\ A\flat\ G$ motive. A few examples can be found in mm. 30 and 48 (see Example 1.10).



Example 1.10 Vladigerov: “Autumn Elegy” from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 30, 48.

Vladigerov writes harsh dissonances in this work, many of which remain unresolved, and yet the sound is still aesthetically beautiful. This is due to the fact that while the dissonances themselves are effectual, they are often presented over pedal points which outline a functional harmony. In mm. 3 and 4 of “Autumn Elegy,” Vladigerov expands on his chord-planing technique. This time he writes parallel dominant seventh chords, much as Debussy might, but adds a minor ninth to each chord, creating a very different effect with the sound, all while maintaining the pedal point, G, underneath (see Example 1.11).



Example 1.11 Vladigerov: “Autumn Elegy” from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 3-4.

Beginning in m. 23, the piece builds to a dramatic climax reaching a level of *triple-forte* by m. 33 before beginning to wind down. Throughout this section, Vladigerov primarily uses a thick chordal texture, often with a short series of octaves in rhapsodic style. His writing techniques follow along similar lines that are discussed above. The key remains C melodic major with numerous instances of cadences using $\flat 7$, $\flat 6$, $\hat{5}$ (e.g., mm. 24-25 and 30-31), and $\flat 3$, $\flat 2$, 1 (e.g., mm. 25-27, and 34-35) in the

melody line. It is interesting to note that the cadence in mm. 30-31 is not approached harmonically in melodic major as the others are, even though the melody is $\flat 7$, $\flat 6$, $\hat{5}$. Rather, whole tone harmony over a dominant pedal is present through m. 30 before cadencing in m. 31 (see Example 1.12).



Example 1.12 Vladigerov: "Autumn Elegy" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 30-31.

The piece winds down, and at m. 43, takes an unexpected turn, arriving on a D \flat instead of a C, where material from the opening is again presented in the key of G phrygian. C harmony is established one final time at m. 48, but the lingering pedal point hints at the presence of G phrygian to the end.

"Humoresque" is a lively, spirited, and playful end to this set of three pieces. Its form is ternary, and the outer sections are filled with staccato notes, short phrases, crisp-sounding chords and sparkling passage-work (see Example 1.13). Both hands play almost exclusively in the treble range of the instrument, and Vladigerov may have found inspiration from works such as Moritz Moszkowski's *Étincelles*, Op. 36, No. 6 which has a very similar character.



Example 1.13 Vladigerov: "Humoresque" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 1-8.

Although the opening theme is straightforward harmonically, Vladigerov accompanies this melody with colorful, sometimes dissonant harmonies. For example, in m. 9, he writes chromatically descending seventh chords to accompany this melody (see Example 1.14). Note that the final seventh chord in this sequence is functional harmonically, unlike the preceding chords, and leads to tonic harmony in m. 12.



Example 1.14 Vladigerov: "Humoresque" from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 9-13.

After the first statement of the theme, Vladigerov begins to restate it in m. 9, but quickly modulates through numerous keys before cadencing again in A major (m. 27). During this passage, he uses several different methods of modulation (see Example 1.15).

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically measures 12 through 29. The score is written for both the right and left hands on a grand staff. Measure numbers 12, 17, 22, and 25 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The key signature consists of two sharps (F# and C#). The music features a variety of dynamic markings: *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), *cresc* (crescendo), and *f* (forte). There are also articulation marks such as accents and slurs. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, chords, and rests. The piece is characterized by its complex harmonic structure and rapid tonal shifts.

Example 1.15 Vladigerov: “Humoresque” from *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, mm 12-29.

To begin with, in m. 12, he modulates through tonal movement by minor third, beginning with A major, through C major (m. 14), to E \flat major (m. 15). Then, he uses a different, more condensed technique, moving chromatically upward through both E and F dominant seventh chords (the latter functioning as dominant harmony) to B \flat major (m. 16). A third technique can be observed moving to the next key of B minor through more diatonic means. The first chord is an E dominant seventh (m. 17), acting as a tritone substitution. This chord also marks the beginning of a typical IV – V – I chord progression, arriving in the key of B minor in m. 19. From here, the music moves through a diminished seventh chord to F# minor (m. 18); then through a German augmented sixth chord (m. 23) and a

cadential six-four (m. 24) to finally arrive in the original key of A major in m. 28. In all, Vladigerov's quick modulations take him through eight different keys in just eighteen measures.

The middle section (beginning at m. 92) has a contrasting character, with a lyrical melody and arpeggios in the bass register. Boriana Buckles describes it as having the feeling of a slow waltz.²⁰ This section opens in the key of C, but that only lasts for one short measure before Vladigerov explores remote keys of B \flat , A \flat and E, all in very short order. He then arrives at a G dominant preparation, which returns to C (m. 100). Although the keys jump from one to another very rapidly, this section works because the bass notes climb chromatically step by step, creating a melodic line in the left hand in counterpoint to the melody in the right hand (see Example 1.16).



Example 1.16 Vladigerov: "Humoresque" from Three Pieces for Piano, Op. 15, mm 92-100.

A transition to the opening material begins in m. 137, with the tempo and dynamic level increasing through Liszt-like passagework, ending in a *glissando* to the

²⁰ Boriana Kojouharova Buckles, "The Significance of Selected Piano Compositions by Pancho Vladigerov" (D.M.A. Monograph., Louisiana State University, 2004), 47.

upper end of the keyboard. A recapitulation begins in m. 162, and the piece ends with a lively and exciting coda.

In his *Three Pieces for Piano*, Op. 15, Vladigerov chose a genre characteristic of nineteenth-century romantic music, and wrote with textures similar to those of Rachmaninoff, Ravel, and Moszkowski. There are numerous compositional traits that can be summarized through this set of pieces. Firstly, one can hear impressionistic influence in his music through the use of whole tone harmony and chord planing (usually over pedal points). Vladigerov extends the parallel movement in several ways: chromatically, with complex chords including sevenths, ninths, elevenths, thirteenths, and other dissonances (such as the added $\flat\hat{9}$ in mm. 3 and 4 of “Autumn Elegy”), and by using different textures such as block chords (throughout “Autumn Elegy”), and broken thirds (as in the opening of “Prelude”). Another trait is his frequent use of pedal points, and the complex, dissonant harmonies written above them. Both “Prelude” and “Autumn Elegy” have pedal points that run virtually all the way through each of the pieces. These pedal points provide harmonic stability and direction to the pieces, while the above harmonies contain a variety of effects, often containing harsh dissonances and chord planing. Of the three pieces, “Humoresque” contains the least amount of pedal points, but lengthy bass notes direct the harmony in the middle section of the piece. A third trait is the variety of modes with which Vladigerov composes. His affinity for melodic major is evident in both “Prelude” and “Autumn Elegy,” as is his common use of approaching cadences through $\flat\hat{7}$, $\flat\hat{6}$, $\hat{5}$, and $\flat\hat{3}$, $\flat\hat{2}$, 1. In addition, other modes can be found throughout the pieces such as phrygian, melodic minor, major, and whole-tone. Lastly,

Vladigerov writes using a traditional virtuoso performance style, mimicking romantic composers such as Liszt, Thalberg, Busoni, Rachmaninoff, and many others.

With his use of all of the above writing techniques, Vladigerov has tapped into the styles of many of his contemporaries in Europe, and added some of his own ideas, creating a voice which is uniquely his own.

CHAPTER 2

Folk music in Bulgaria has a long tradition, passed down from generation to generation, and it flourished especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The music is a direct representation of the country's national culture, with many factors shaping its development. One of these factors is the wide variety of disparate folk styles and traditions throughout the small country. Due to the hilly and mountainous topography of Bulgaria, travel between villages was often difficult, and during the winter months, it could be impossible. As a result, many communities evolved in relative seclusion, developing idiosyncratic variations on general folk music styles.²¹

Without question, political history influenced the development of Bulgarian folk music as well. For nearly 500 years, the Ottoman Empire ruled and occupied Bulgaria. These years were typified by great violence and oppression of the people, in the period before the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, after which the Russians, together with the Romanians and Bulgarian rebels, defeated the Turks.

The main influence on folk music, however, came from the events in people's everyday lives. As Timothy Rice describes it:

Before World War II, Bulgaria was primarily a rural society with an agricultural economy, and most Bulgarians farmed small plots of land surrounding their villages. Their lives, including their singing, playing, and dancing, were tied to the cycle of seasons and the rhythm of work that the seasons imposed: heavy labor in the fields during spring and summer and relatively lighter work around the house and yard during the fall and winter. During the summer they sang "harvest songs" to ease the work in the fields and in winter "sitting songs" during communal work parties at someone's home.²²

²¹ Donna A. Buchanan: 'Bulgaria, II. Traditional Music' Grove Music Online ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 3 July 2007).

²² Timothy Rice, *Music in Bulgaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 46.

In spite of the numerous smaller differences in folk music between the many regions of Bulgaria, this chapter will focus on several global traits of Bulgarian folk music, especially as it existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

SONG TYPES

There are four main genres of folk songs. The first is celebratory; the second is labor, which reflects the people working domestically, and on the farm; the third genre is *na trapeze*, meaning, “at the table;” and the last genre is the *horo*, meaning dance-like songs.

Celebratory songs were associated with occasions such as weddings, holidays, and other events. Music is a very important part of weddings in Bulgaria, and is played in abundance throughout preparations for the event, as well as before, during, and after the ceremony itself. Since the marriage celebration typically lasts for several days, even up to a week, numerous songs will be sung and played.²³ It is very common for the *gaida* (Bulgarian bagpipe) to be played throughout these celebrations. As Timothy Rice states, “A common expression claims that ‘a wedding without a gaida is impossible.’”²⁴ Several kinds of song can be played at weddings, including some melodies which are more improvisatory-sounding, and some that are unmetered, often containing an abundance of ornaments. These melodies can be more poignant, especially when played at moments such as when the bride’s family present her to the groom and his family.²⁵ After the ceremony, the guests all participate in one of the most popular and traditional wedding dances called the *pravo horo* (straight dance). The guests stand up and join hands,

²³ Ibid., 115.

²⁴ Timothy Rice, *Music in Bulgaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

forming a “train” around the room.²⁶ Traditionally, this is a joyous, lively *horo* in duple meter, with a fairly simple dance pattern that all the locals know well. Also common to Bulgarian weddings is the *rachenitza*. Unlike the other types of *hora*, this dance is generally a solo dance; if there is more than one dancer, each will take turns dancing by himself in the middle of the group. The word, *rachenitza* is derived from *rachenik* (handkerchief), since the dancers typically hold a handkerchief in one of their hands, spinning and waving it as part of the dance.²⁷ *Rachenitzi* are generally instrumental, and in the meter 7/16 with the pattern $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩♩}$. Example 2.1 shows a popular *rachenitza*.



Example 2.1 Dobri Hristov: *Muzikalno-teoreticesko i publicistichsko nasledstvo*. Sofia: 1967, p52.

Songs and dances are an important part of all calendar holidays in Bulgaria, including many traditions for Lent and Easter, but folk songs for *Koleda* (Christmas) are the most popular, and make up the highest percentage among the celebratory melodies.²⁸ In a tradition similar to Christmas caroling, on Christmas Eve groups of boys and men process from house to house, often accompanied by a *gaida* player, to sing songs.²⁹ Meters for the *koledarski pesni* (*koleda* songs) vary, but were most commonly 2, 5, 7, and 9 beats per measure. Example 2.2 shows a song in 5/8 meter.

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁷ Lidia Litova Nikolova, *Bulgarian Folk Music* (Sofia: Musika, 1982), 78. Translated for the author by Vessela Gintcheva.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ Rice, 48.



Example 2.2 Balkanton BHA 10616 A4.

Labor songs were some of the most important since they formed the basis of the typical Bulgarian farmer's life. Traditionally, Bulgarian women worked in the house, handling the domestic affairs, and also worked in the fields. They would learn to sing while doing various tasks under the instruction of their mothers, grandmothers, and older sisters. Many of these songs have no meter, and have a free, improvisatory quality about them. Example 2.3 shows such an example, with many turns, and ornamental figures.



Example 2.3 *Bulgarian Folk Art*, Vol. 13. Sofia: 1965, No 246.

But not all songs revolved around work and chores. Songs *na trapeze* (at the table) were prevalent in Bulgarian folklore. These varied much more widely in topic, which could include domestic and historical events, everyday relationships with people, and even heroes with special powers.³⁰ Example 2.4 is an example of such a song with translation.

³⁰ Nikolova, 50.

Moderato

Már - ko, Már - ko, Kra - li Már - ko, ti mi ia - désh,
ia - désh, pi - esh puk ne zná - esh, Kra - li Már - ko.

"Márko, Márko, Krali Márko,
Ti mi iadésh, iadésh, piesh,
Puk ne znáesh, Krali Márko,
Selóto su bastisáli
Trista túrtzi anadóltzi.
Maika ti su zakolili,
Sestrá ti su ró b robili,
Libe ti su v plén plenily."
Che mi stána Krali Márko,
Ta obléche chérno ráso,
Chérno ráso kalúgersko,
Ta vuzsédna búrzo kónche,
Ta pripása óstra sábia
I otide v téhno sélo,
Che izkóli trista túrtzi.

"Marko, Marko, Krali Marko,
You are loafing, eating, drinking,
Little knowing, Krali Marko,
That your village has been ravaged
By three hundred Turks of Anadoli.
They have slaughtered your old mother,
And imprisoned your own sister,
Your sweetheart they've made captive."
To his feet sprang Krali Marko
And he donned a long black cassock,
Long black cassock such as monks wear.
Marko mounted his swift horse, then,
Girding on his sharpest saber,
Fast he rode back to his village,
All three hundred Turks beheaded.

Example 2.4 Ivan Kamburov, *Bulgarski narodni pesni*. Sofia: 1940, p96.

Since table songs covered such a wide variety of topics, the style of song also varied, but many of them tended to display the improvisatory ability of the singer. As is shown in Example 2.5, the range was typically wider than usual, filled with ornaments, and was emotionally charged³¹.

Бавно, свободно

Про- чул ми са е
млад Сто- ян, млад Сто- ян,
мла- да
вой- во- да из та- зм
Ста- ра пля- ни- на.

Example 2.5 *Bulgarian Folk Art*, Vol. 13. Sofia: 1965, No 258.

³¹ Ibid., 49.

The final, and most important genre is the *horo*. Not surprisingly, elements of the *horo* are most conspicuous in the music of Vladigerov. *Horo* is a broad term which encompasses all dance forms. These *horo* make up the largest percentage of Bulgarian musical folklore and were performed at a wide variety of occasions such as weddings, celebrations, and other social events.³² There is a specific place in nearly every village in Bulgaria called the *horishte* which is designated for people to come together during holidays and other events to dance the *horo*.

Horo are nearly always danced by groups of people.³³ They can be executed in closed or open circles, spirals, a single long line, or several short straight rows. Dancers clasp each other by the hand, belt (usually a red, cloth sash), shoulder, or locked arms to produce human “chains.”³⁴ Another important type of chain dance is the *Nalesa*, in which only a select group of very good performers dance in a straight line and execute much more complex maneuvers. Simultaneously, they shout periodic commands to cue the other dancers.³⁵

Bulgarian *horo* have a very wide variety of dance movements. Some of them show a connection with animal movements. A few examples are the *zaeshkata* (a *zaek* is a rabbit), the *katsnal brumbar* (a landing beetle), and the *metchkarsko horo* (bear dance). Other dances include movements which mimic the motions of manual labor. Some of these, for example, are the *ludo kopano* (crazy digging), the *kalaidjiisko* (a *kalaidjiia* is a smith who polishes copper) and others. Other *horo* imitate the motions of certain people, such as the *Kutsata igra* (“crippled” play), *stareshko horo* (a *staretz* is an old person), and

³² Ibid., 51.

³³ There are a few exceptions, such as the *rachenitza*.

³⁴ Donna A. Buchanan ‘Bulgaria, II, 2(iv), ‘The khoros’ Grove Music Online ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 4 July 2007).

³⁵ Nikolova, 189.

the *krotko* (calm).³⁶ When dancers lock arms, hands, or hold each other's sashes, their upper bodies remain relatively still. The majority of the movement is done with the legs. Depending on the temperament and type of *horo*, the manner of dancing could be calm, walked, or "crazy fast," and for the men, high leg-lifts and stomps, as well as shouts or exclamations were common with some dances, and created a level of high energy and intensity.³⁷

Horo melodies are both vocal and instrumental. Historically, they were all originally vocal, mainly sung by women, and often antiphonal. In such a case, these dance-songs were, "...sung antiphonally by two pairs of women located near the front of the line, but could include larger groups of singers."³⁸ Later, instrumental accompaniment became more and more prevalent, and by the late twentieth century, *horo* performed with song had almost disappeared. Bulgarian folk dances were usually accompanied with instruments such as the *gaida* (bagpipe), *kaval* (wooden flute), *gadulka* (fiddle), and *tupan* (drum).³⁹ In modern Bulgaria, ensembles can include instrumentalists who play clarinet, accordion, trumpet, violin, keyboard, and drum-set, and it is common for each of the players to alternate with solos in a similar manner to American jazz. The modern style has also become so embellished with ornaments that one rarely hears "straight" notes.

In all of Bulgaria, the most popular *horo* are *Pravi hora* (straight *horo*) in duple meter. Other different types of *horo* include the *Paidushko horo*, which is in a meter of

³⁶ Ibid., 188.

³⁷ Rice, 32.

³⁸ Donna A. Buchanan 'Bulgaria, II, 2(iv), 'The khoro' Grove Music Online ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 5 July 2007).

³⁹ Nikolova, 193.

five, the *Rachenitza*, which is in a meter of 7, and the *Napred-nazad* (meaning forward and back), which is in a meter of 9.⁴⁰

INSTRUMENTS

The *gaida*, or Bulgarian bagpipe, has traditionally been the most popular for celebratory gatherings, and it is particularly common at wedding celebrations. The *gaida* is made of a whole goatskin which is preserved and cured, then packed in dry salt for several days, which results in an airtight, pliable bag.⁴¹ Three pipes are then inserted with wooden blocks into the bag: one is the blowpipe, one is the drone, which is made of three wooden pieces, and one is the melody pipe.⁴² Sometimes, the *gaida* has two drones a fifth apart. The bagpiper (*gaidar*) is able to produce the drone note at the same time as the melody notes, and as long as air pressure remains in the bag, the sound remains constant even when the *gaidar* momentarily pauses to take a breath. The *gaidar*, as well as other folk instrumentalists, typically begin with a simple folk tune and then improvise continuously on it. They embellish their melodies constantly with a variety of turns, trills, and other ornaments.⁴³ There exist few transcriptions of such embellishments, but Example 2.6 shows a folk song for the *gaida* upon which a player would typically improvise. Note that even in its unembellished form, there are numerous ornaments, including grace notes and turns.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 39.

⁴² Ibid., 39.

⁴³ Kremenliev, 139.



Example 2.6 *News from the Music Academy*, Vol. 11. Sofia: 1952-1974, p 54

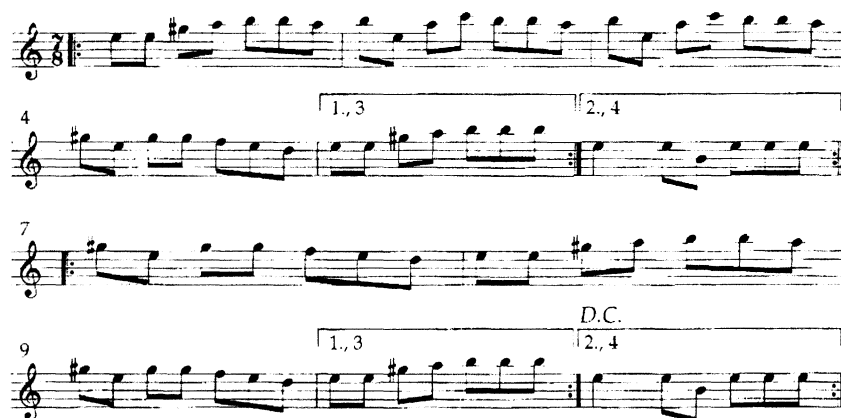
The *Kaval*, which is a favorite instrument of shepherds, is a kind of a wooden flute. It is different from both the side-blown western flute, and the end-blown recorder in that it is held at an angle of about thirty degrees to the player's mouth.⁴⁴ It has six or seven holes in the front, and one in the back, similar to that of the recorder. The range of the *kaval* is wide, at three octaves, and the tone color range is also significant. Its depth of sound is similar to a clarinet in the high register, like a flute in the middle register, and sounding like an oboe in the low register.⁴⁵ Performance practice for the *kaval* is similar to that of the *gaida*, with emphasis on both improvisation and ornamentation. A shepherd, who might spend many hours each day playing his *kaval* would improvise so

⁴⁴ Rice, 36.

⁴⁵ Kremenliev, 137.

many variations that original folk themes would become unrecognizable, and if the player is skilled, the instrument is capable of very rapid articulation.

The *gadulka* is the most popular string folk instrument. It is a wooden, pear-shaped, bowed instrument. The instrument is played vertically, with the performer resting it on his knee, or belt. Folk melodies are played on three main strings tuned at a fifth apart, which run down the length of the instrument from the pegs over a bridge to the tailpiece. Eight resonating strings run parallel and underneath the three.⁴⁶ Since there are strings underneath and there is no fingerboard, the main strings are not stopped in the same manner as western string instruments, that is, by pressing the string against the fingerboard. Here the strings are stopped in midair with either the finger tip or the fingernail, in the same manner as a violinist playing harmonics.⁴⁷ Example 2.7 shows an example of a *rachenitza* for solo *gadulka*.



Example 2.7 Balkanton BHA 10616 A3.

Notice the very small ambitus for the melody. This is typical of the *rachenitza*.

The *tupan* is the most widely played percussion instrument, and is similar to a bass drum. The drum heads were usually made from sheep skin, and attached with hemp

⁴⁶ Rice, 35.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

chords.⁴⁸ The *tupan* is hung from a strap on the player's shoulder and played with two sticks. The first is a hard mallet, which is used for the heavy accents, while the second is a soft, flexible stick which is used for secondary accents. The lighter stick can also be held against the drum head while the heavy mallet strikes to create various effects of vibrations.⁴⁹ It was used primarily to accompany vocal songs, instrumental songs, and dances.

One must remember that these instruments were not mass-produced. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, each of these instruments was hand-made, and even within the same region they could vary in numerous small ways. The comparable instruments of different regions of course had more significant differences.

FORM, AND MODE

Most Bulgarian folk songs are strophic. They tend to have a small melodic range: usually of a fourth or fifth, although they expand rarely to a seventh or eighth, and even more rarely to a ninth or tenth. In addition to strophic songs, a large number are also in free, quasi-improvised form, which do not follow any predictable structure.

Bulgarian folk music uses a variety of modal types: pentatonic, diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic (see Figure 2.1 below for a chart of the most commonly used modes). The last note of the song is generally considered to be the final, or the first scale

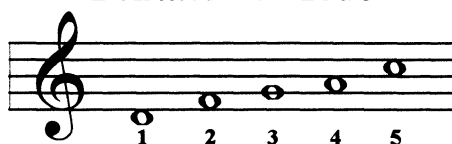
⁴⁸ Donna A. Buchanan 'Bulgaria, II, 2(iii), 'Instruments' Grove Music Online ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 7 July 2007).

⁴⁹ Kremenliev, 141.

FIGURE 2.1

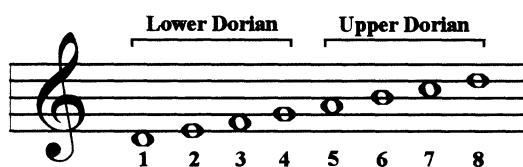
CHART OF MOST FREQUENTLY USED MODES IN BULGARIAN FOLK MUSIC

Pentatonic Mode

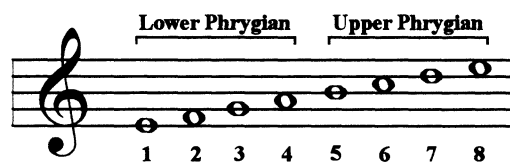


Diatonic Modes

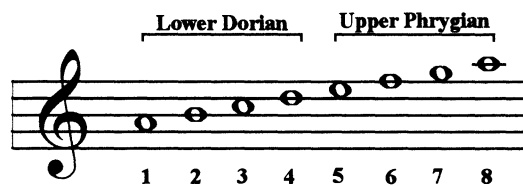
Dorian Mode



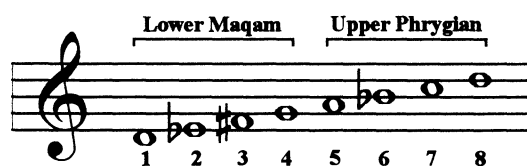
Phrygian Mode



Aolian Mode



Maqām Hidjas



Phrygian mode is also seen often in Bulgarian folk songs, and as with dorian, songs that use all the notes of the mode are rare.⁵³ Since the phrygian mode is made up of the same two tetrachords (e.g., E F G A and B C D E), it is easier to determine the mode given a small range in the song.

Aolian mode is formed by connecting two different tetrachords: a lower dorian, and an upper phrygian. This mode is very commonly used in Bulgarian folk music, and tends to have a slightly larger range of a sixth or seventh.^{54,55} With the range at only a fifth, the mode could also still be dorian, so a sixth scale degree is necessary to determine the mode. The following short song is in aolian mode, and has the range of a seventh (see Example 2.9). Note the interesting, irregular phrase structure in the above example (two groups of five measures).



Example 2.9 *Folk Songs from Northeastern Bulgaria*. Vol. 1. Compiled by R. Katzarova, I. Kachulev and E. Stoin. Sofia: 1962, No 906.

Mixolydian and ionian modes are both occasionally used in this repertoire, but less often than dorian, aolian, and phrygian.⁵⁶

In Bulgarian folk music, chromatic modes refer to the *maqām*, a middle-eastern mode that found its way to Bulgaria, largely through Turkish influence. The key component in the *maqām* is a chromatic tetrachord that spans a perfect fourth, and includes the intervals of an augmented second and two minor seconds (e.g., A B \flat C \sharp D).

⁵³ Ibid., 162.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 164.

⁵⁵ With the range at only a fifth, the mode could also still be dorian, so a sixth scale degree is necessary to determine the mode.

⁵⁶ Nikolova, 169.

songs, especially when played on the *kaval*.⁶⁰ Example 2.11, shows a transcription of one such song using “half-sharps” to notate the quarter tones.

M.M. ♩ = 304

Ráv-na ze - lé - na mo - rá - va, gó - ro lio, gó - ro ze - lé - na

Example 2.11 *Rávna zeléna Moráva*. Sung by Ivanka N. Moneva, 46; and Danka I. Vasileva, 42; of Golem-Izvor, Teteven, March, 1928.

RHYTHM AND METER

Vladigerov's first teacher of composition, the renowned composer, conductor, and musicologist Dobri Hristov is a key figure in Bulgarian musicology, especially as it pertains to folk music. In his many books and articles, he covered important topics of folk music including basic principles of meter, rhythm, and mode, and as well, he revealed the importance of folk music for the establishment of a Bulgarian national school of composition.⁶¹ He was the first to present a detailed analysis of Bulgarian rhythmic meters in his treatise, “Rhythmic Bases of Bulgarian Folk Music,” from 1913 (published shortly after he taught Vladigerov from 1910-1912).⁶²

Bulgarian folk meters can be divided up into three categories: even, uneven, and non-metered. Since there are so many different kinds of meters, the even and uneven categories are best classified in terms of simple or complex, as defined by Lidia Nikolova.⁶³ For example, 2/4 or 3/4 are simple meters with the first beat being the strongest. Complex meters feature a sub-grouping of the beats within the meter. For

⁶⁰ Ibid., 186.

⁶¹ Lidia Litova Nikolova, *Bulgarian Folk Music* (Sofia: Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, 2004), 95.

⁶² This treatise was later published in volume 1 of *Hristov's Muzikalno-teoreticesko i publicistichesko nasledstvo* from 1967-1970.

⁶³ Nikolova, 55-122.

instance, 4/4 is classified as complex even, since it is subdivided 2+2. In contrast, 5/4 is complex uneven, since it might be grouped 2+3 or 3+2.

Among the even meters, 2/4 is by far the most popular, making up a significant portion of all Bulgarian folk music, and extending to all regions of the country. This is the signature meter for the *Pravo horo* (straight dance). Though this meter is simple and even, its songs can be presented in numerous different ways to alter the sound rhythmically. The phrases can vary in length and be presented inconsistently within songs. In addition, phrase-lengths can be found in different combinations of groups. Among many others, a few examples include six-measure groups (3 + 3), nine-measure groups (3 + 6), eleven-measure groups (4 + 3 + 4), and fourteen measure groups.⁶⁴ Example 2.12 shows a song with a 3 + 4 + 3 phrase group. Here, the three phrases are each concluded with agogic accents.



Example 2.12 – Vasil Stoin, *Bulgarskata narodna muzika* (Sofia, 1927), p. 69, no. 163.

In addition, it is very common in meters of 2/4 to combine triplets with duples, providing rhythmic variety to the song as can be seen in Example 2.13.



Example 2.13 *Folk Songs from Timok to Vita*. Edited by V. Stoin. Sofia: 1928, no. 4022.

⁶⁴ Kremenliev, 16.

Another way to alter the rhythmic sound of this simple, even meter is through the use of lyrics in conjunction with the music. Lidia Nikolova describes the melodies of many Bulgarian folk songs as syncretic with the text and/or dance.⁶⁵ This fusing of these different elements leaves numerous variations of structure throughout the melodies, therefore making classification difficult. The melodies often simply follow the speech, which can contain varying numbers of syllables in each line, and where accented syllables often, but not always, land on strong beats.⁶⁶

It is also common to find folk songs where the natural rhythm of the strophe does not follow or relate to the rhythmic pulse of the music. In these cases, the placement of the syllables create phrases of different lengths, creating an uneven feel to the music (see Example 2.14).



(Example 2.14 *Folk Songs from Northeastern Bulgaria*. Vol 1. Compiled by R. Katzarova, I. Kachulev and E. Stoin. Sofia: 1962, No 916.)

In the above song, it makes the most sense to arrange the text in the following way: the first three syllables make one word, the next two syllables make another word, and the last three syllables make a third word, “Отдолу идат мърмамо” (They’re coming from over there). Likewise, the second half of the song is arranged in the same manner with the same number of syllables in each word “тридесет млади юнака” (Thirty young heroes). This makes 3 + 3 + 4 beats over the span of five measures in a meter of 2/4, and

⁶⁵ Nikolova, 9.

⁶⁶ Kremenliev, 83.

creates an uneven feel to the horo in spite of its simple-looking meter. Compared to the above song in 2/4, a more natural way of presenting the text with the given rhythm would be as follows:



Uneven meters make up the most interesting aspect of Bulgarian folk music. Some of the most common meters are 5/16, 7/16, 9/16, and 11/16. They are all complex, uneven meters, combining sub-groups of twos or threes. Hristov describes how irregular meters make up the basis of Bulgarian music, in distinct contrast to other European music, where irregular meters rarely appear. He states, “In Bulgarian folk music, the irregular measure is made of equal primary parts which are indivisible into smaller parts...” and “...these indivisible parts are made into larger parts by the combination of two or three of them.”⁶⁷ By “equal primary parts,” Hristov means individual notes of equal value such as sixteenth notes within a meter of 5/16.⁶⁸ Hristov also included the following table of meters shown in Example 2.15, many of which are used in Bulgarian folk music.

⁶⁷ Dobri Hristov, *Muzikalno-teoreticesko i publicisticheskoto nasledstvo*, Vol. 1 (Sofia, 1967), 39-40. Translated for the author by Vessela Gintcheva.

⁶⁸ Consider that Hristov originally wrote this treatise in 1913, and at that time was writing about folk music that had been a part of Bulgarian culture long before Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, and other 20th-century European composers began exploring uneven meters.

1. = 2/8 (4/16)
2. = 5/16
- 2a. = 5/16
3. = 6/16
4. = 7/16
- 4a. = 7/16
- 4b. = 7/16
5. = 8/16
- 5a. = 8/16
6. = 9/16
- 6a. = 9/16
- 6b. = 9/16
7. = 10/16
8. = 11/16
- 8a. = 11/16
9. = 12/16
- 9a. = 12/16
- 9b. = 12/16
10. = 13/16
11. = 14/16
- 11a. = 14/16

Example 2.15 Dobri Hristov, *Muzikalno-teoreticesko i publicisticheskno nasledstvo*, Vol. 1, p35

The most common of all the uneven meters is 5/16 with the two groups arranged and it is the basis for the *paidoushka* dance, as well as other *hora*⁶⁹ (see Example 2.16).



Example 2.16 *Folk Songs from Timok to Vita*. Edited by V. Stoin. Sofia: 1928, no. 303.

⁶⁹ Krustev, 47.

Many Christmas and holiday songs can also be found in this meter, which are generally in a fast tempo.

Triple, uneven meters such as seven are also very common in Bulgarian folk music. They can be divided into any of the following three ways: $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, or $\text{♩} \text{♩}$ with the first being the most common. This particular meter is found in the popular round-dance, *rachenitza*, and is usually in 7/16 (see Example 2.17).



Example 2.17 *Folk Songs from Timok to Vita*. Edited by V. Stoin. Sofia: 1928, no. 1059.

Another triple, uneven meter is 8/16 ($\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$). Although it is much less common than 7/16, it is still popular, especially in the Pirin region⁷⁰ (see Example 2.18).



Example 2.18 V. Stoin. *Bulgarian Folk Music*. Sofia: 1956, no. 107.

Songs with meters of nine are divided into four parts. The possible combinations are: $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, and $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$. These songs are common in

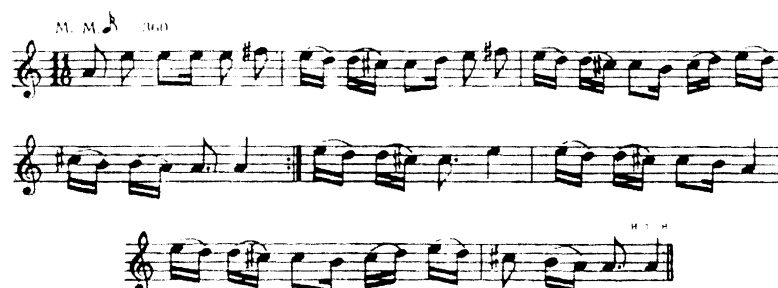
⁷⁰ Ibid.

Christmas songs and *hora*, and are used in all regions of the country.⁷¹ The first combination (2 + 2 + 2 + 3) is by far the most common, while the other combinations are very seldom used (see Example 2.19).



Example 2.19 *Bulgarian Folk Songs from Bessarabia*. Collected by Colonel Iankov. Notated by Dobri Hristov. Book XXVII. Sofia: 1913, no. 101.

Quintuple meters of eleven are very popular. Of the possible combinations, two are used most frequently. The first places the beat of three in the middle: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ (see Example 2.20).



Example 2.20 *Folk Songs from Timok to Vita*. Edited by V. Stoin. Sofia: 1928, no. 1073.

The second combination puts the beat of three at the end: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪. These two meters are mainly used in fast, *hora*-like melodies.⁷²

Meters of 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15 are all used in Bulgarian folk music, but are not very common. They are primarily used for songs with fast tempi, and are divided into groups of twos and threes in much the same manner as is described above. It is also possible to combine different meters in one song.

⁷¹ Nikolova, 90.

⁷² Ibid., 103.

The final category is non-metered songs. The basis for many celebratory, labor, and table songs, these melodies are very free in rhythm. Dobri Hristov pointed out for the first time that Bulgarian folk music is very rich in melodies that do not have any kind of meter, and they are entirely “ad lib” when it comes to the rhythm.⁷³ These songs have a combination of very complex rhythms, and improvisatory ornamentations, which can provide a difficult challenge for transcription. Here is one such example (see Example 2.21).



Example 2.21 *Bulgarian Folk Art*. Vol. 13. Sofia: 1965, no. 708.

The rhythm and meters of Bulgarian folk music are some of the most diverse and interesting of any one culture. It is remarkable that, with the exception of simple duple meters, there is little correlation to standard western meters. Meters such as 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, or 12/16, are virtually nonexistent in this repertoire. Instead, one finds a large variety of meters, which are uneven or irregularly grouped. Even when one does find meters such as 8/16, 9/16, and 12/16, they are not divided into even beats, as would be Western compound meters.

⁷³ Hristov, 39.

CHAPTER 3

Pancho Vladigerov's *Vardar, Bulgarian Rhapsody*, Opus 16 is his most famous work, both in Bulgaria and abroad, with hundreds of live performances and many recordings. With its remarkable blend of folk and western art music, it has become Bulgaria's signature piece, and has sounded for over eight decades from the concert stage, and in the halls of music schools and academies in Bulgaria. To this day, it is performed each year on the opening concert of the International Summer Music Festival in Varna, Bulgaria, and is known to virtually all the people of the country. It was originally written for violin and piano, but Vladigerov transcribed it for orchestra, piano solo, four-handed piano, two pianos, violin and orchestra, and two violins. The solo piano version will be primarily discussed here, and with very little exception, it stays faithful to the original score. There are a few notable markings and effects from the original version that are only possible with the violin, and are therefore omitted from the piano solo version. These will be briefly referred to throughout the analysis.

The story behind the creation of the rhapsody is an interesting one, as Evgeny Pavlov tells it:

One day at the end of October, 1922, Pancho and his brother were having dinner in a restaurant in Berlin with the company of other Bulgarians who lived there. Among them were Grigor Vassilev and the artist Konstantin Shtarkelov. After a few beers, Shtarkelov started singing Bulgarian folk songs. One of these songs really impressed the composer and he asked Shtarkelov to repeat it, and he wrote it down in his notebook. Pancho did not know the song, but Grigor Vassilev did, and he said that he had heard it in Skopje, Macedonia a few years ago, and he thought it was a folk song from Macedonia. He asked Pancho whether he could create some kind of composition using this theme, and the composer responded, "Yes, I think I can."⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Evgeny Pavlov, *Pancho Vladigerov* (Sofia: Musika, 2000), 66. Translated for the author by Vessela Gintcheva.

After this meeting, Vladigerov quickly created a composition, developing the idea into a rhapsody for violin and piano on Bulgarian folk motives. In very little time he had sketched the piece, and by December 13, 1922, he had completed a piece he entitled, "Bulgarian rhapsody for violin and piano." Soon after, Vassilev visited the Vladigerov brothers' home and inquired about the rhapsody. After hearing the two brothers Pancho and Luben perform the new work, he insisted that the composer name the work "Vardar," because he believed the main theme came from a folk song sung in the *Vardar* region, home of the longest river in Macedonia.⁷⁵ He also asked Vladigerov to dedicate the piece to the Bulgarian youth who were suffering there.⁷⁶ The work was published in 1924 by Universal Edition with a dedication in German to the struggling Bulgarian youth in Macedonia, as well as the following clarification, "*Vardar* is a river in Macedonia." The story took a curious turn later, when Vladigerov discovered that the song he had heard from Shtarkelov and quoted as a Macedonian folk song in his work, turned out to be a song written by Dobri Hristov, the composer's first composition teacher. Hristov's song was published several times after its composition in 1912, and was known under several titles. Hristov, at the time, was flattered by the fact that a student had used his song as the theme for his rhapsody, but in a private conversation he expressed to Vladigerov that he would like it to be noted in the score that his theme was used.⁷⁷ Vladigerov acceded to his request to remove the original notes from future publications and performances. He never, however, noted that the original theme came from Hristov.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 66.

⁷⁶ Due to the vast unrest in the Balkan Peninsula and fallout from the two Balkan Wars of 1912-13, authorities were persecuting young Bulgarians who maintained their heritage in and around Skopje, Macedonia.

⁷⁷ Pavlov, 67.

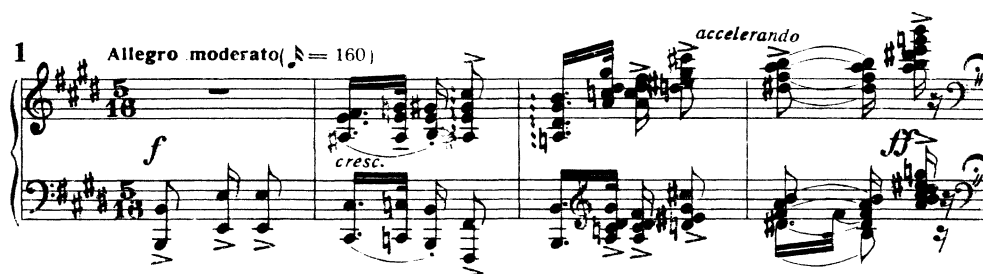
On January 27, 1923, Pancho and Luben Vladigerov premiered the *Rhapsody Vardar* in Berlin. A few months later, they performed it in Sofia, Bulgaria, and would present it many times throughout Germany and Bulgaria over the next several years. By 1925, Vladigerov's music left the boundaries of Europe and reached across the ocean to the United States, where violinist Max Rosen performed the *Rhapsody Vardar* along with Vladigerov's "Valse Romantique," on a recital in Carnegie Hall, New York.

The success of Vladigerov's *Rhapsody Vardar* stems in part from its interesting presentation of folk-inspired material within a Western-style idiom. The genre of the rhapsody itself is derived from literary sources, and could denote an epic poem or miscellaneous collection of writings, and later, an outpouring of sentiment or emotion in writing, to which music was then linked.⁷⁸ Vladigerov's rhapsody has similarities to Franz Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. Both composers wrote with a nationalistic flavor using folk elements, and like Liszt's rhapsodies, Vladigerov's *Rhapsody Vardar* was written in a virtuoso style, with great demands on the performer's technique. Unlike Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies however, which have varying forms and more slow, improvisatory-like sections, Vladigerov's rhapsody was written in a more simply-structured form: ternary. Formally, a comparable example in this genre is Brahms' G minor rhapsody, Opus 79, No. 2, which is in ternary form with a concluding coda.⁷⁹

The *Rhapsody Vardar* opens with a four-measure introduction which culminates in a startling and effective chord. This chord is formed by a cluster of whole tones, but serves as an extension to dominant harmony, and arrives in m. 3 (see Example 3.1).

⁷⁸ John Rink: 'Rhapsody' *Grove Music Online* ed L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>, (Accessed 19 June 2007).

⁷⁹ Boriana Kojouharova Buckles, "The Significance of Selected Piano Compositions by Pancho Vladigerov" (D.M.A. Monograph., Louisiana State University, 2004), 48.



Example 3.1 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 1-4.

The main theme for the work comes from Dobri Hristov's third set of songs, which he named "To My Homeland" (see Example 3.2). These songs were published in 1917 after the devastation of World War I and the two Balkan Wars, and their lyrics reflect his homeland, the national flag, and crushed national ideals.⁸⁰ The song on which the *Rhapsody Vardar* is based is called, *Ednichuk Chui Se Vik* (A lone voice is heard). The text is uplifting, and is now considered a true, national hymn.⁸¹



Example 3.2 Hristov: *Ednichuk Chui Se Vik*.

When comparing this with Vladigerov's statement of the theme, one can see the many similarities, though the melody lines are not exactly identical (see Example 3.3).

⁸⁰ Venelin Krustev, *Profiles in the History of Bulgarian Music* (Sofia: Musika, 1976), 146. Translated for the author by Vessela Gintcheva.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Example 3.3 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 5-20.

Both are in a meter of five with a 2+3 subdivision, typical of many Bulgarian folk songs such as the *paidushko horo*. The tempo is stately and presented in a grand style with a very thick, chordal texture. Harmonically, Hristov's original song is very simple. It is almost entirely harmonized with tonic and dominant harmonies, with only a hint of a subdominant chord in the third measure. Hristov does, however, write interesting chromatic material in his first repeat which steps down through $\hat{5}$, $\hat{4}$, $\hat{3}$, $\hat{2}$, and leads back to tonic harmony. Vladigerov uses this chromatic motion in the bass, and it becomes a distinguishing element in the opening of the rhapsody.⁸² Although Vladigerov stays

⁸² It is interesting to speculate about Vladigerov's original source for this piece. The close similarities to Hristov's original song cannot be entirely coincidental, especially where the left hand is concerned. Note how in measure 13, Vladigerov leaps up to a higher register in the left hand, just as Hristov leaps up in his

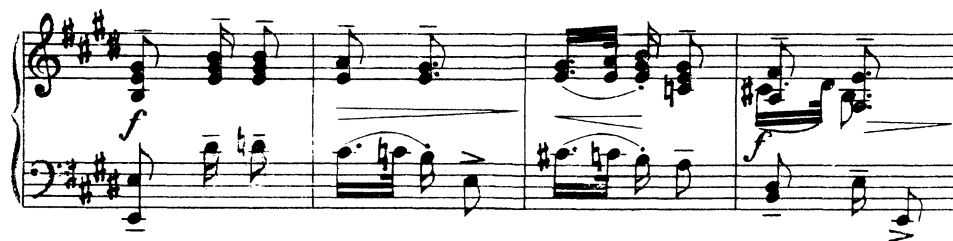
close to the overall harmonic structure of the original, he infuses many of the chords with his own distinct color along the way. In the first measure of this theme (m. 5), he moves to a C# minor (vi) chord, and uses chromatic third-related harmony to move immediately to a C major chord, which drastically changes the color. It also, however, smoothly connects the bass line down into the next measure. In m. 8, Vladigerov writes appoggiaturas in the top voices of the first chord. The G# not only creates a pleasing dissonance with the seventh of the chord, but also voice-leads the alto line downward to the cadence at the end of the measure. This line in the alto, starting in m. 7, is clearly derived from the corresponding bass line in Hristov's folk song.

Vladigerov decorates the remainder of the theme in a similar manner, taking great care to make sure that, despite the chordal texture, he still creates clear contrapuntal lines in many of the voices. It should also be noted that while the melody in the upper-most voice is clearly the most important, Vladigerov also places great importance on the bass line, moving it chromatically in many places, suggestive of Hristov's original song. But unlike Hristov, who wrote the chromaticism as passing and decorative, Vladigerov often builds his harmonies directly from the chromatic bass.

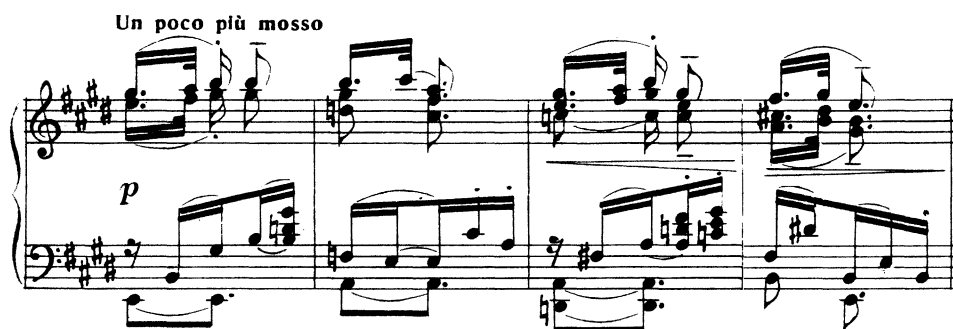
After the first sixteen bars, Vladigerov repeats this theme as Hristov does, except Vladigerov writes out his repeat (starting in m. 21), in a more grandiose style, with fuller chords. He then reiterates the second eight bars of the main theme twice to conclude the A section of the piece. The first iteration (mm. 37-44) is lighter and more playful, with new variations in the harmony (and melody at m. 38). For example, m. 15 is comprised

lower voice. As well, there can be no mistaking Hristov's chromatic connector at the first repeat. Vladigerov clearly uses this figure in his own version. The very small details of Vladigerov's evening out with his friends are unknown, but Shtarkelov had been inebriated and was singing songs. Surely, he was only singing the melody, so how Vladigerov had picked up some of these intricacies of the left hand is left unknown.

mainly of triads, with only one seventh chord present, but in the comparable m. 39, Vladigerov expands upon this (see Examples 3.4a and 3.4b) . The harmony here is made up of a five-note whole-tone chord plus the note A. The function of this chord is not clear, other than it is built on D major harmony. It could be considered a IV/IV chord, but most likely Vladigerov chose it in order to simply move the harmony through the circle of fifths for mm. 37-39 – E, A, D – before ending the phrase with V to I harmony.



Example 3.4a Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 13-16.



Example 3.4b Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 37-40.

Shortly thereafter, in mm. 41-45, harmonic movement is seen again by movement through the circle of fifths, with the bass line progressing through D, G, C, and then F#, B, E. The chords overtop this straight-forward bass line, however, are much more complex, and include chromatic movement, seventh chords, and tritone sonorities. This tendency in Vladigerov's composing – writing complex, dissonant chords over the top of simple and standard chord progressions or pedal points – is one that can be found not

only in the *Rhapsody Vardar*, but also throughout his *Three Pieces for Piano* as well. It is also why many of these complex, dissonant, and sometimes clustered harmonies still make sense to the ear.

The second time Vladigerov restates these eight measures (mm. 45-52), he varies the harmony yet again, and gives specific instructions regarding tempo and rubato. This last statement is extended, and forms a transition to the middle section of the piece.

The contrasting B section of the piece is comprised of six *hora* in the traditional 2/4 meter (see Chart 3.1). Vladigerov maintains this meter until the A section returns. The first *hora*, marked *allegro vivace* is fast, with a light, playful texture and spirit, contrasting the slower, statelier A section. There are three different themes in this *hora*, shown below (see Example 3.5).



Example 3.5 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar* Taken from the violin part of the original version.
Example a: mm. 75-81. Example b: mm. 83-90. Example c: mm. 92-99.

Vladigerov alternates between the three themes during this dance. Although they are all in 2/4, he creates playful syncopations with combinations of triplet eighths, duple eighths, and dotted rhythms, and deliberately places numerous accents on weak beats. For

CHART OF *HORA* AND THEIR THEMES IN THE B SECTION OF *RHAPSODY VARDAR*

| | MEASURES | KEY/MODE | CHARACTER | TEMPO | DYNAMIC | SIMILAR TO |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1ST <i>HORO</i> | THEME 1 | 63 - 82 | E Aolian | light, playful | <i>Allegro Vivace</i> | <i>p - f</i> |
| | THEME 2 | 83 - 98 | G Major/E Aolian | light, playful | <i>Allegro Vivace</i> | <i>p - f</i> |
| | THEME 3 | 99 - 118 | Unclear - E Aolian | playful | <i>Allegro Vivace</i> | <i>f</i> |
| 2ND <i>HORO</i> | | 119 - 155 | E Mixolydian | <i>quasi gaida</i> | <i>Vivacissimo</i> | <i>p - f</i> |
| 3RD <i>HORO</i> | THEME 1 | 156 - 175 | E Minor | uplifting, jubilant | <i>Vivace</i> | <i>ff</i> |
| | THEME 2 | 176-195 | E Melodic Major | <i>quasi musette</i> | <i>Vivace</i> | <i>p</i> 2nd Horo |
| 4TH <i>HORO</i> | THEME 1 | 196 - 211 | D Mixolydian/E Minor | celebratory, <i>quasi mandolin</i> | <i>Impetuoso</i> | <i>ff, p</i> |
| | THEME 2 | 212 - 233 | E Minor | lively, syncopated | <i>Vivace</i> | <i>p - fff</i> |
| 5TH <i>HORO</i> | THEME 1 | 234 - 257 | E Mixolydian | <i>quasi gadulka</i> | <i>Vivace</i> | <i>p - f</i> 2nd Horo |
| | THEME 2 | 258 - 285 | Maqām | lyrical, softer | slightly slower | <i>p - f</i> 1st Horo, Theme 2 |
| 6TH <i>HORO</i> | | 286 - 333 | G Mixolydian/D Mixolydian | majestic, celebratory | <i>Con grande bravura</i> | <i>f - fff</i> 2nd Horo |

example, in both the piano part of the original version, as well as in the piano solo version, the third theme has *sforzandi* placed on beat two of almost every measure, as shown below in Example 3.6.



Example 3.6 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 63-69.

The first of these themes is in E aolian mode. This theme is rather unremarkable harmonically, except for a few jarring chords that Vladigerov writes in strategic places. He always puts them at the end of four-bar phrases on an offbeat – either beat two, or the “and” of beat two – and he marks them with a *sforzando*. There are several such examples through the first two themes of the first *horo*, and their jarring nature has to do both with their placement, and with their harmony. While some of them are only seventh chords (mm. 66, 70), others include both sevenths and ninths (mm. 78, 82, 90). The most surprising chord is at m. 74, and is made up entirely of whole-tones, much like the chord in the introduction at m. 4. These accents likely make reference to the *horo* folk dance, representing stomps, or exclamations.

Some differences between the solo piano version and the violin-piano version should also be noted here. The original composition contains certain markings and effects written in by the composer that are not present, nor even possible in the piano solo

version. An example of this can be seen in the first theme in m. 63. There are instructions in the original score to rap the right sideboard of the violin with the thumb while sharply playing pizzicato chords, creating a marvelously playful effect, suggestive of a folk percussion instrument such as the *tupan* (see Example 3.7).

Allegro vivace (♩ = 168)

Violin: Pollice (thumb) rap the right sideboard of the violin with the thumb while sharply playing pizzicato chords.

Piano: *p* (piano), *rf* (rhythmic figure).

Example 3.7 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, Original Version, mm. 63-68.

The equivalent section in the piano solo version lacks this effect (see Example 3.8).

Allegro vivace (♩ = 168)

Piano: *p* (piano), *sf* (sforzando).

Example 3.8 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 63-69.

One can easily see that the two piano parts are nearly identical, with the violin part simply omitted from the piano solo version. While the original version has been much less often performed than either the solo piano or orchestra versions, it certainly should be performed more often. The original composition remains a remarkable version of this piece.

The second theme is much like the first, though it contrasts the key of G major with momentary returns to E aolian again. Here, Vladigerov writes a countermelody in the left hand of the piano, which he marks with accents, a tune reminiscent of the chromatic bass line heard so prominently as a counterpoint to Hristov's melody (see Example 3.9).



Example 3.9 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 83-90.

The third melody in this group is notable because of its melodic emphasis on the note, E. The prominence of this note leads well into the next *horo* which has pedal points on E and B. Also, in the left hand, the texture is relatively sparse in this melody, and consists mostly of dissonant dyads, which primarily fall on off-beats. There is a pedal point on the note G#, which particularly clashes with both the A and the G# in the melody above (see Example 3.10).



Example 3.10 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 100-106.

The second *horo*, beginning in m. 119, is again in 2/4, and its tempo is quicker still, marked *Vivacissimo*. Here, Vladigerov writes in such a fashion as to imply the sounds of the *gaida* (Bulgarian bagpipe). He uses this technique liberally in the middle section of the piece, which features extensive use of pedal points. For this dance, a third staff is used to maintain pedal points on the notes E and B, which represent drones on the *gaida*. Meanwhile, the upper voice develops a melody which could be played over the drones on a *gaida* (see Example 3.11). The tonic of this dance is still E, but Vladigerov writes in mixolydian mode here, with the fourth scale degree, A, often sharp.⁸³ Four variations of this light and graceful dance follow, each with varying registers and textures. In the original version with violin, Vladigerov writes “quasi celeste” at the third variation, and although he leaves this out in the piano solo version, the performer can still try to achieve this effect by varying his sound and articulation while playing.

⁸³ At first glance, this may appear to be in lydian rather than mixolydian, but lydian requires not only a sharp $\hat{4}$, but a sharp $\hat{7}$. In this example, the D is natural, negating that possibility. In addition, it seems unlikely that Vladigerov would write in a mode (lydian) that is almost never used in Bulgarian folk music, when this piece is based on that very subject. More likely, it is mixolydian mode with a sometimes-raised $\hat{4}$.

The musical score for Example 3.11, Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm 119-126, is presented in three systems. The first system, at the top right, is a piano introduction marked 'Vivacissimo' with dynamics 'p' and 'pp'. The second system, starting at measure 120, is marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and features a piano introduction. The third system, starting at measure 125, continues the piano introduction. The score includes a repeat sign with a first ending bracket and a second ending bracket. A tempo change to 'And.' is indicated at the end of the section.

Example 3.11 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm 119-126.

The second *horo* leads into the third in m. 156, which itself contains two themes. The first is perhaps the most uplifting and jubilant dance in the rhapsody, again marked *Vivace*, and *fortissimo*. Although the harmony points towards E minor, much of this dance moves through the circle of fifths (A, D, G, C), spending very little time in any one key. In much the same manner as in the first *horo*, at the end of each eight-measure phrase, an accented chord containing mostly whole tones emphasizes the weak second beat. The chord at the end of m. 163 is a B \flat dominant (containing the notes A \flat , B \flat , C, D, E and F) whose function is a tritone substitution for the expected V7 of the A minor chord following (see Example 3.12).

Example 3.12 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 156-166.

The second theme which begins at m. 176, provides another pedal point drone with the root and fifth in the left hand. Vladigerov writes *quasi musette*, implying the dance-like style which suggests the sound of a bagpipe with a drone. Indeed, this bagpipe melody is graceful and lyrical in the same manner as the previous one (second *horos*) at m. 119. Vladigerov maintains the key of E here, but changes the mode to melodic major, giving the passage a brighter sound (see Example 3.13).

Example 3.13 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 176-183.

This leads to the fourth *horos*, which contains two themes. The first theme begins in m. 196, is marked *impetuoso*, and is in D mixolydian mode. Although it remains in D for the great majority of time, it reverts to the key of E briefly at the end of each eight-

measure phrase, in much the same manner as the second theme of the first *hora* in m. 87. Gender frequently played a role in *hora* with men and women taking turns during the dance as well as dancing together. This dance is one of the few that Vladigerov marks *ff*, and every chord in the right hand is marked with an accent. Thus, Krustev suggests that perhaps this is a male dance, where one can hear the stomping of the foot in the theme (see Example 3.14).⁸⁴



Example 3.14 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 196-203.

In m. 204, Vladigerov restates a variation of this theme, making a drastic shift in both texture and register. In the original version of this piece, the composer marks in the score, *quasi mandolino*, and creates the effect by pizzicato chords in the violin with staccato notes in the piano. In the piano version, Vladigerov again leaves out the instructions; however, the score is marked *leggiero*, and the dynamic drops to *p*, which creates a contrasting effect.

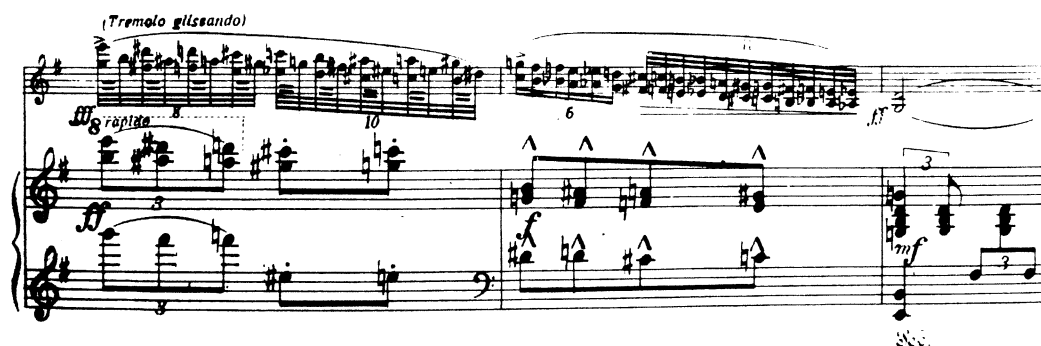
⁸⁴ Krustev, 325.

The second theme, beginning in m. 212, develops with syncopated rhythms alternating with descending parallel chords (see Example 3.15). When looking more closely at mm. 212-213, one can see that the melody line is a slight variation on the third *horo* (mm. 164-166). The individual chords beneath the melody each comprise four tones from the whole-tone hexachord, and descend chromatically. Vladigerov makes use of whole-tone harmony here, as well as descending parallel chords. These traits can be seen frequently in his music, and were also characteristic of *Three Pieces for Piano*. These chords are primarily not functional. Rather, they lead to an important harmonic goal, which in this case is a tritone substitution for the dominant (F dominant seventh for B dominant seventh), preparing the key of E minor, which follows shortly thereafter.

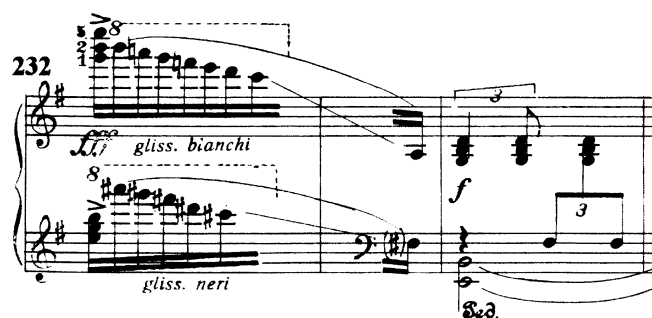


Example 3.15 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 212-218.

This lively dance continues to build with Vladigerov adding to the texture until full whole-tone hexachords are present (mm. 224-225). The register continues climbing higher with continuing syncopated chords, and an accelerando, creating an even more breathless feeling. This leads to the culmination of the rhapsody in m. 217, marked by a tremolo glissando on the violin in the original version, and a double glissando with the right hand on the white keys and the left hand on the black keys in m. 232 in the piano solo version (see Examples 3.16a and 3.16b below).



Example 3.16a Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, Original Version, mm. 217-219.



Example 3.16b Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 232-234.

The fifth *horo*, beginning at m. 234 contains two themes. There are some interesting differences in the first theme between the original version and the piano solo version. In the violin and piano version, Vladigerov writes *scordatura* into the violin part, indicating that the G string should be de-tuned to E. This retuning of one or more strings is typically done prior to the start of a piece, and is accompanied by specific notation or instruction. Only on very rare occasions is retuning required during a piece because accuracy is difficult to achieve, and the tuning can be unstable. In spite of these difficulties, this is one such occasion (see Example 3.17). The tempo of the piece here is such that there is very little time to make the tuning change, but once it is made, it stays for the length of the fifth dance. The low E string is present throughout, acting as a pedal point in the violin part below the upper voice. It has been suggested that this *scordatura*

is an attempt to imitate the timbre of the *gadulka*, perhaps in imitation of its sympathetic vibrating strings.⁸⁵

*Le baissement de la corde Sol doit se faire de la manière suivante: F :::: - signe du baissement

Example 3.17 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, Original Version, mm. 220-224.

The themes from this fifth *horo* are variations on some already-heard themes:

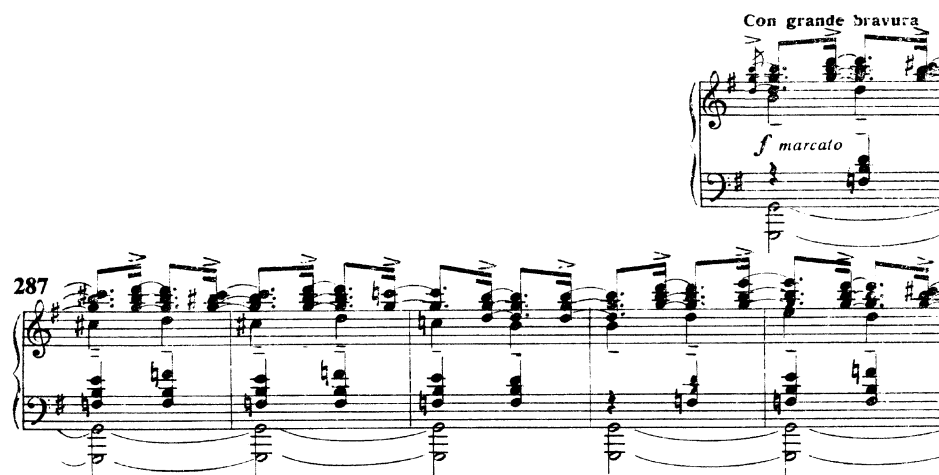
The material in m. 242 is based on the second *horo*, though it maintains lighter sonorities and graceful rhythms. In terms of contour and rhythm, the second theme in m. 258 is reminiscent of the second theme of the first *horo* (m. 83), though it varies in significant ways. It is softer dynamically, played at a slightly slower tempo, and most importantly, it uses the *maqām* (see Example 3.18).

Example 3.18 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 258-265.

⁸⁵ Buckles, 54.

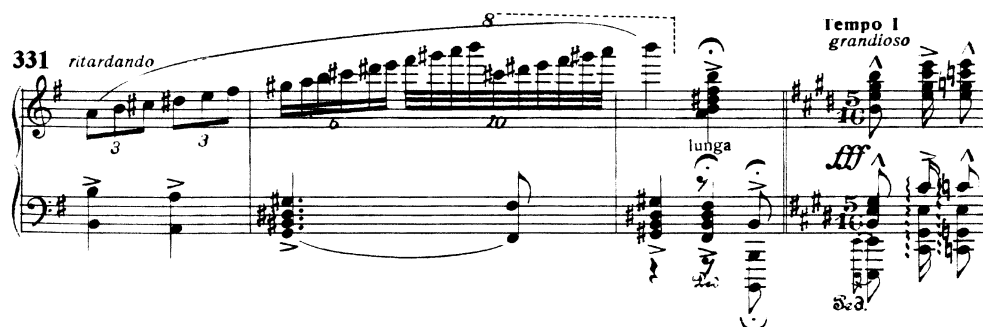
The sixth and final *horo* in m. 286 is in G mixolydian (see Example 3.19).

Although there are numerous C \sharp 's in this melody, they function as chromatic neighbor tones, and are not a basis for the mode. They are also part of a melody which is a variant of the second *horo* in m. 119. Vladigerov writes *Con grande bravura*, and the dance is presented in a majestic and celebratory style with full chords in both hands over an octave-G pedal point.



Example 3.19 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 286-291.

In m. 302, Vladigerov reiterates the theme from the sixth dance in the key of D mixolydian with arpeggio figures in the left hand. This leads to B dominant prolongation, and builds to a climax before returning to the opening theme of the piece in E major in m. 334 (see Example 3.20).



Example 3.20 Vladigerov: *Rhapsody Vardar*, mm. 331-334.

The opening material is restated with full chords sometimes spanning as much as two octaves in one hand. It is shorter in length, and leads into the coda in m. 369.

Vladigerov approaches the transition to the coda in exactly the same manner as he approaches the B section of the piece. The opening-theme material winds down with almost identical voicings as before and takes the music to a near-full stop on several fermatas before the coda begins.

The coda begins in a meter of 2/4 just as the middle section begins, and also uses triplets and *horo*-like intonations.⁸⁶ Vladigerov writes *Cominciare lentamente ed accelerare molto* at the beginning and arrives at a *Presto* marking only four measures later. He continues to accelerate and writes later markings of *Prestissimo*, and finally *Furioso*, arriving at a triumphant and thrilling finish to the piece.

Pancho Vladigerov's *Rhapsody Vardar* is an exceptional example of a blending of styles. During his childhood and early musical training in Bulgaria, folk music was very much a part of his life. When he studied in Sofia as an adolescent, he was taught by Dobri Hristov, who not only composed folk songs, but wrote numerous treatises on the subject. As a result, a great many of Vladigerov's compositions include folk elements. (The *Rhapsody Vardar* is an example of such a work.) All of the themes in the piece are either from original folk songs, or are songs written in the Bulgarian folk style. The most obvious elements are the traditional meters, including 5/16 for the A sections, and 2/4 for the *horo* in the B section. In addition, the range of many of the melodies is small, especially in the middle section, reflecting the folk practices of Bulgarian music. Vladigerov also uses many different modes throughout the rhapsody, including major, minor, aolian, phrygian, and mixolydian, as well as the middle-eastern *maqām*.

⁸⁶ Krustev, 326.

Vladigerov also attempts to recreate the sounds of certain folk instruments through his instructions in the score, and his style of writing. Included in these are the sounds of the *gaida*, mandolin, and *gadulka*.⁸⁷

After his childhood years, Vladigerov went to Berlin for the remainder of his musical studies, attending two famous academies, the most notable of which was the *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin. Through his experiences and training there, he developed a style of writing inspired by many great western composers. In *Rhapsody Vardar*, the influences from Western European art music are numerous. In regards to the overall structure of the piece, Vladigerov used a standard ternary form of ABA' plus a coda. His harmonic language is complex and varied. Vladigerov often affects otherwise simple harmony with colorful chords (often composed as subsets of the whole tone collection) at the end of four- or eight-bar phrases. Certainly Debussy's use of chord planing, and the whole-tone scale have affected many of Vladigerov's works, and inspired him to experiment further with these techniques. An exceptional pianist and experienced performer himself, Vladigerov was also influenced by the virtuoso style of composers such as Liszt, and Busoni, and he most admired the works of Rachmaninoff. Like the elder Russian composer, Vladigerov's harmonies are thick with huge chords, and there are numerous countermelodies in inner voices accompanying the main themes. As well, he composed in this virtuoso style, often, requiring the performer to navigate running triplets and sixteenths, arpeggios, glissandos, fast octaves, and chords.

⁸⁷ Vladigerov also tries to mimic the sound of the celesta, but this instrument is associated more with orchestral, western art music in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and does not have specific ties to Bulgarian folklore.

When bringing all of the above together, combining folk and western influences with his lyricism, passion, and excitement, one hears the unique sounds of Pancho Vladigerov in this remarkable piece.

APPENDIX A

List of Works by Pancho Vladigerov*

- Opus 1 Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Major (1914).
 Opus 2 4 Works for Piano (1915).
 Opus 3 Variations for Piano (1916).
 Opus 4 Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in B-flat minor (1916).
 Opus 5 6 Lyrical Songs for High Voice and Piano, and "Ballade Ludgidia" for High Voice and Piano (1917).
 WoO "Romance Elegy" for Cello and Piano (1917). 2 Transcriptions.
 Opus 6 Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 1 in A minor (1918).
 Opus 7 2 Improvisations for Violin and Piano (1919). 2 Transcriptions.
 Opus 8 Symphonic Legend for Orchestra (1919).
 Opus 9 10 Impressions for Piano (1920). 1 Transcription.
 Opus 10 4 Pieces for Piano (1920). 2 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play, "Cesar and Cleopatra" (1920).
 Opus 11 Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 in F minor (1921).
 Opus 12 4 Pieces for Violin and Piano (1921).
 Opus 13 Music for the play, "A Dreamy Game" (1921).
 Opus 13 Scandinavian Suite from "A Dreamy Game" (1924). 2 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play "Üdit" (1922).
 Opus 14 Burlesque for Violin and Piano (1922).
 Opus 14 Burlesque for Violin and Orchestra (1922).
 Opus 15 Three Pieces for Piano – Prelude, Autumn Elegy, Humoresque (1922).
 Transcribed Autumn Elegy for orchestra (1937).
 Opus 16 Bulgarian Rhapsody Vardar for Violin and Piano (1922).
 Transcribed for orchestra (1922).
 Transcribed for Violin and Orchestra (1951).
 Transcribed for Piano 4-hands (1931-1955).
 Transcribed for Piano (1955).
 Transcribed for 2 Violins (1971).
 Transcribed for 2 Pianos (1976).
 Opus 17 6 Exotic Preludes for Piano (1924). 1 Transcription.
 WoO Concert Piece for Violin and Piano (1924).
 WoO Music for the play, "The Merchant of Venice" (1924).
 Opus 18 2 Bulgarian Paraphrases for Violin and Piano – Horo, Rachenitza (1925).
 1 Transcription.
 WoO Foxtrot for Piano (1925). 2 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play "The Chalk Circle" (1925).
 Opus 19 5 Songs for High Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra (1925).
 2 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play, "Uarets and Maximillian" (1926).
 Opus 20 2 Pieces for Violin and Piano (1926). 2 Transcriptions.

- Opus 21 Bulgarian Suite for Piano (1926).
 Opus 21 Bulgarian Suite for Symphonic Orchestra (1927). 5 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play, "Much Ado About Nothing" (1928).
 WoO Music for the play, "Yusik" (1929).
 Opus 22 Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in C Minor (1930).
 Opus 23 7 Symphonic Bulgarian Dances for Orchestra (1931). 8 Transcriptions.
 Opus 24 "Classical and Romantic" for Piano (7 pieces) (1931). 4 Transcriptions.
 Opus 25 "Bulgarian Songs and Dances" for Piano (1932). 3 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play "Twelfth Night" (1932).
 Opus 26 3 Songs for Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra from the play
 "Twelfth Night" (1932). 3 Transcriptions.
 Opus 27 Concert Overture "Earth" for Orchestra (1933).
 Opus 28 Sonatina Concertante for Piano (1934).
 Opus 29 "Shumen Miniatures" – 6 Pieces for Piano (1934). 7 Transcriptions.
 WoO Music for the play "Elenovo Tsartsvo" (1935).
 WoO Music for the play "The Fan" (1935).
 Opus 30 "Tsar Kaloian" – Opera in 3 Acts (1936).
 Opus 31 Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 3 in B-flat Minor (1937).
 Opus 32 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra
 (1938).
 Opus 33 Symphony No. 1 in D Minor (1939).
 Opus 34 String Quartet in G Major (1940). 1 Transcription.
 Opus 35 Concert Fantasy for Cello and Piano (1941).
 Opus 35 Concert Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra (1948).
 Opus 36 Episodes for Piano (1941). 2 Transcriptions.
 Opus 37 "Watercolors" for Piano (1942). 5 Transcriptions.
 WoO "Horo Staccato" for Orchestra (1942). 3 Transcriptions.
 Opus 38 4 Romanian Symphonic Dances (1942). 1 Transcription.
 Opus 39 2 Romanian Symphonic Sketches (1943). 1 Transcription.
 Mixed Opus "Divertimento" – 5 Pieces for Chamber Orchestra (collected from
 previous works) (1943).
 Mixed Opus 4 Waltzes for Orchestra (collected from previous works) (1943).
 WoO Concert Mazurka for Piano (1943).
 WoO 5 Choral Etudes for Woodwinds (1943).
 WoO 4 Choral Etudes for Brass (1943).
 WoO 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra
 (1943).
 WoO 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra
 (1943).
 WoO 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for High Voice and Piano or Chamber Orchestra
 (1943).
 WoO Music for the Movie, "Bulgarian-Hungarian Rhapsody" (1943).
 WoO "For Controversial Times" for Mixed Choir and Piano (1945).
 WoO "September, 1944" for Mixed Choir (1945).
 Opus 40 "Legend of the Lake" – Ballet in 3 Acts (1946).
 Opus 40a 1st Suite for Orchestra from the Ballet "Legend of the Lake" (1947).

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| Opus 40b | 2 nd Suite for Orchestra from the Ballet “Legend of the Lake” (1953). |
| Opus 41 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for Voice and Piano (1947). 1 Transcription. |
| Opus 42 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for Voice and Piano (1948). 2 Transcriptions. |
| Opus 43 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for Voice and Piano (1948). 2 Transcriptions. |
| Opus 44 | Symphony No. 2 in B-flat Major for String Orchestra (1949). 2 Transcriptions. |
| Opus 45 | “Heroic Overture, September 9 th ” (1949). |
| Opus 46 | “Pictures” for Piano (1950). 6 Transcriptions. |
| Mixed Opus | “Prelude Bogdane and Bulgarian Dance” (collected from previous works) (1950). |
| Opus 47 | “Jewish Poem” for orchestra (1951). 1 Transcription. |
| WoO | “Caprice” for Bassoon and Piano (1951). |
| Opus 48 | “Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 4 in G Major (1953). |
| Opus 49 | 2 Pieces for Orchestra (1953). 3 Transcriptions. |
| WoO | “Song for the Loved One” (1953). 2 Transcriptions. |
| WoO | “Song about Happy Youth” for Mixed Choir (1953). |
| WoO | Theater music for the play, “Happiness” (1954). |
| Opus 50 | Suite from the play, “Happiness” (1954). 2 Transcriptions. |
| Opus 51 | Suite of 5 Pieces for Piano (1954). 1 Transcription. |
| Opus 52 | Dramatic Poem – “Song for Peace” for Orchestra (1956). |
| Opus 53 | 3 Pieces for Piano (1957). 1 Transcription. |
| Opus 54 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for High Voice and Piano or Orchestra (1958). |
| Opus 55 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for High Voice and Piano or Orchestra (1958). |
| Opus 56 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for High Voice and Piano or Orchestra (1958). |
| Opus 57 | 3 Concert Pieces for Piano (1959). 1 Transcription. |
| Opus 58 | Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 5 in D Major (1963). |
| Opus 59 | “Novellettes” – 5 Pieces for Piano (1964). 2 Transcriptions. |
| WoO | Two Pieces for Violin and Piano from the music for “The Merchant of Venice” (1964). 1 Transcription. |
| WoO | Classical Minuet for Oboe and Piano (1964). 2 Transcriptions. |
| Opus 60 | 5 Pieces for Piano (1965). |
| Mixed Opus | 6 Symphonic Novellettes from Opus 59 and Opus 60 for orchestra. |
| Opus 61 | Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 2 in G Minor (1968). |
| Opus 62 | 6 Bulgarian Folk Songs for High Voice and Piano or Orchestra (1968). |
| Opus 63 | “Lullen Impressions” – Symphonic Suite for Orchestra (1972). |
| Opus 64 | “3 Short Pieces for Piano (1972). |
| Opus 65 | 4 Pieces for Piano (1973). |
| Opus 66 | “5 Silhouettes for Piano” (1974). |
| Opus 67 | 4 Songs for High Voice and Piano or Orchestra (1974). 1 Transcription. |
| Opus 68 | “5 Poetic Pictures for Piano” (1976). |
| Opus 69 | “4 Frescas for Piano” (1977). |
| Opus 70 | “3 Bagatelles for Piano” (1978). |

* For an exhaustive list of works, including details of all transcriptions, see Evgeny Pavlov, *Pancho Vladigerov*, (Sofia: Musika, 2000), 351-361.

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